

Bible Study # 90  
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### The Writings Series—Daniel—Part 1

**We are getting into the book of Daniel this evening.** Daniel is one of the books of what is called the postexilic books. That is, it was written after the exile of the Jews from Jerusalem.

Daniel's name literally translated means "God has judged" or "God is Judge." That meaning certainly accords quite well with the message of the book. The book has to do with God's judgment on the Gentile kingdoms.

In common with the other books in this Writings section, it was written both by royalty and about royalty. That's one comment I think I have not made about the Writings series. The book of Psalms was written mostly by King David. King Solomon wrote Proverbs. Job, who was called the greatest man in the East, in terms of power and possessions, would certainly be of the rank of a king or a prince. When you look at the Megillot, Song of Solomon was written by King Solomon and Ruth was written about the royal lineage and climaxed with the birth of King David. The book of Lamentations is the lament for King Josiah. King Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. The book of Esther was written about Queen Esther. There is a connection of royalty that goes through.

Daniel was written by a man who rose to prominence in the Babylonian Empire and became the number two man of the empire directly under the king. It was certainly written about royalty, and it was written in an entirely different style than the prophetic books.

Generally, we would tend to think of Daniel as being part of the Prophets, but Daniel was not included in the Major and Minor Prophets in the traditional Jewish order. There are several reasons for that. Daniel has the distinction of being one of those books that was written outside of the Holy Land. It was not primarily concerned with Israel in terms of its content. The style of it is different.

If you go through the Prophets, over and over the style there is 'that the word of the Lord came to "so-and-so" the prophet in this year or that year.' That is the method or style used as you go through all of the three Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) and the 12 Minor Prophets.

That is not what you see in the book of Daniel. There is a totally different style. In its prophetic sense, the prophetic material is almost all involved in the interpretation of dreams, and we find that it is of a different style.

Daniel is the book of the Old Testament that most directly corresponds with the book of Revelation of the New Testament. The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation correspond. In the Jewish order, the Writings are the third and final division. If Daniel were the end of the Old Testament (if that's where it stopped), it would certainly correspond with Revelation in the New Testament.

The books that had to come after Daniel had to close out the story of the exile. When you read the book of Daniel, you have the background of the story of what happened in Babylon during the time of the captivity. You have the story from the time the Jews were taken from Jerusalem and throughout the whole 70-year period of captivity. That story is told in the book of Daniel. It was a first-person account. Daniel was there; he was on the scene.

In the book of Esther, we have the story of what transpired even later after many of the Jews had returned to Judea. It was the story of what transpired in the Jewish community that had remained behind and what was by that time the Persian Empire. Daniel and Esther both told the story of the Jews in exile.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah pick up the story with the Jewish community that returned from exile. After the captivity, the Jewish community was split. There were those who remained in exile and those who returned to the Promised Land. Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of the return. When you put those together with Daniel and with Esther, you have the story of the postexilic period.

Chronicles, as we will see, comes back and sums up the whole story from beginning to end—from the beginning of the Old Testament period with Adam right on down to the Jews being allowed to return. It ends on that note. We will notice that a little later in the Bible study on Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

The book of Daniel is a very important book because it sets the stage. You cannot understand the book of Revelation without the book of Daniel. We will see, as we go through Revelation, how much of what John states in Revelation is a quotation and an expansion of material given in Daniel.

The authenticity of Daniel has been greatly disputed by the critics. There's a reason why

they want to dispute the book of Daniel. They want to dispute the book specifically because of the detailed prophecies contained in the book of Daniel. The longest, most detailed prophecy in the entirety of the Bible is Daniel 11. (I will give you a two-page handout that will take you verse by verse through Daniel 11 that you can use for your own Bible study.)

[The handout is included with Bible Study # 91.]

Do you see the problem with that? If Daniel was written when Daniel says it was written, which is in the period of the sixth century B.C., then you have detailed prophecies that run right on down to who married whom, who got mad at whom and all this going back and forth between the king of the North and the king of the South (the Ptolemys down in Egypt and the Seleucids up in Syria). You have a detailed account of all this strife and all these things that cover a period of about 400 years or so. How could a human being have known every “in and out” on down?

Clearly, you can follow prophecies in Daniel 11 in great detail down to about 165 or 164 B.C. This is why many of the critics try to assign the book of Daniel to the period of the Maccabees after all of the events of Daniel 11 had happened. To recognize that it was written when it says it was written, you have to acknowledge God’s hand in it being written.

The critics run into some problems on that because the book of Daniel stands proven by the very details that the critics in past years sought to use to disapprove it. Daniel mentions people such as Belshazzar and Darius the Mede. Those individuals were not mentioned in secular sources. The only accounts that came down in terms of book form were those written by the Greek historians—primarily Herodotus and a few other Greek historians. There were details that they didn’t mention. Of course, they were Greeks and were writing the history of Babylon and Persia from a Greek standpoint. They had records available to them that we don’t have today. They told the story and there were details they left out. The histories that were written in Babylon and Persia had not survived.

In the last couple of decades, archaeology has made great strides. They uncovered some of the histories that were written by the Babylonians and the Persians and some of the monuments that they erected. And guess what? The very details that the critics had said proved the book of Daniel was a “pious fraud” actually confirmed the book. That is a contradiction in terms. How can you be pious and perpetuate a fraud? But that

was what the critics called Daniel. The very details that they used to “prove their point” that it was not authentic are the very things that have confirmed the book. Here were people that had long since been lost to history. When they dug up some of the material in Babylon and Persia, what did they find but records of Belshazzar and of Darius the Mede!

We will go into the story in the book of Daniel. Remember Belshazzar promised Daniel that if he would interpret the handwriting on the wall, he would make him the third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:7). That was his promise of reward. ‘If you can tell me what this means, I’ll make you the third ruler in the kingdom.’ Why did he say the third ruler in the kingdom? –Because he, himself, was the second man in the kingdom. He was reigning as king in Babylon but was associated on the throne with his father, Nabonidus, who was elsewhere. He was the one who was actually holding court in Babylon. He was like a co-king with his father and had actually sort of worn the crown. This was a detail of history that the Greeks had not recorded. It wasn’t understood or confirmed by secular history until, let’s say, in the last 15 years. But Daniel records that. The very details that the critics said proved that Daniel was a fraud, in reality, confirmed it. You had details—at the time, the critics thought Daniel was written 400 years after the fact—which had long since been lost to history.

Think about it; let’s use a little common sense. Four hundred years would be 1592. How easily do you think you could forge a document that you claim had been written in 1592? You include in all kinds of details, and you’re writing a firsthand account as though you were there at the court of the king of France. You are recording details of all the “ins and outs” of things that were going on. How accurate a history do you think you could concoct from something like that? It wouldn’t be very much. Realize that we have a lot greater access to written records and the preservation of historical material from 400 years ago to today than they had from 400 years back then.

With the printing press and things like that, you have multiple copies of books. Back then, when you had books, you had, maybe, one or two copies. In some cases, that was all there ever was because they had to be hand copied. So, there were not many copies of a lot of the records. If it got lost, the whole thing got lost. Even today, for books that were printed hundreds of years ago, there were at least a few thousand copies that

were printed. An awful lot can be destroyed and still have bits and pieces that remain.

The point is that the idea of being able to forge a document is ridiculous. To put it in our terms, can you come along and forge a document that you claim was written by somebody on the spot 400 years ago? How are you going to have it accepted by the whole nation and give it great religious authority? Well, it would be like trying to come up with an extra paragraph of the constitution—slipping it in and fooling everybody that it was a part of the original thing all along. It's ridiculous! Some of the crazy theories these critics come up with. You wonder how in the world they can do it.

The whole point is that they have an innate prejudice against the fact of a real God—a God who steps into history and intervenes. Sometimes, they come up with something that contains incontrovertible proof of that; then boy, they have to try and explain that away. There are many other things. There are details—names of people, specific information of the Babylonian court, all kinds of information and internal details—that prove that Daniel was written as stated in the book.

Another proof that Daniel was written as stated in the book is the proof of language. The book of Daniel is written partially in Hebrew and partially in Aramaic. Aramaic is a similar language to Hebrew in that it is a kindred language—perhaps in the way that French and Spanish are kindred languages. There is a certain similarity. If you read one well, there's a lot you can figure out in reading the other.

There were two different Aramaic dialects. The Aramaic used in the book of Daniel is what's called the Imperial Aramaic dialect. It was the Aramaic dialect of the Persian court in the fifth and sixth centuries—not the so-called Western Aramaic dialect, which was extant in Palestine centuries later. Western Aramaic was the common language extant in the time of Christ and for two or three centuries prior to that in Palestine.

The Aramaic used in the book of Daniel is not the common Aramaic of Palestine. It is what's called the Imperial Aramaic dialect. There are Persian technical terms that are used in the book that have fallen out of use in the language in the later periods. Persian names for things changed over the years. You may think back of old expressions that perhaps your grandmother or grandfather used that you never hear anymore. You will occasionally run across it and it will remind you, 'I haven't heard that expression for

years and years.' Expressions and names go out of fashion. If 100 or 200 years go by, nobody even recognizes them anymore. They just simply cease to be used, and that occurs over a period of time.

When the Jews were living in Persia, they picked up names for things that they would use even in their own language. In the case where two languages exist together, you sometimes pick up names of items from the people of the other language. It's just like certain terms or expressions that have come into the French language that's used in South Louisiana. Over the years they picked up or borrowed terminology, and this sort of trading goes on. Again, this is another proof that Daniel was written at the Persian period because it used terminology that several hundred years later was no longer in use at all. There are many things that certainly authenticate the book of Daniel.

There is a tremendous amount that's packed into the book of Daniel. Let's get directly into Daniel. We pick up the story.

Daniel 1:1-2, "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar..."—The land of Babylon. This was in 604 B.C.; this was the original Babylonian invasion.

Verse 3, "Then the king [King Nebuchadnezzar] instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children [teenagers] of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles..." These could have been young people from perhaps 10-12 years of age up to perhaps 14 or 15. They were young enough that it was felt that they still had several years of education left and could be utilized by the Babylonians.

Verse 4, they brought those who were healthy and seemed to be well educated and had good abilities. They brought the ones that they felt had potential in terms of the Babylonian Empire.

Verse 5, it was appointed that they should live in an area annexed to the palace. They would live in the general palace compound and eat of the food from the king's table. Eventually, after several years of education, they would be brought and examined before the king and be utilized. The Babylonians were on the lookout for talent.

Verse 6, "Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and

Azariah.” There were four specific ones who were singled out. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah are better known to us by their Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. Those are the names that we are most familiar with; those are the Hebrew and the Babylonian names.

Verse 7, it goes through and gives the Babylonian names that each of them was given.

Verse 8, “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

Why did Daniel want to avoid these things? Well, undoubtedly, part of the reason was because a lot of the food the king ate was unclean. Even what wasn’t unclean had been, in most cases, sacrificed to idols. This was the case with the wine. Daniel could see that this was not right.

Think about it. We are not told exactly how old Daniel was, but he was a teenager. He had been brought up in Jerusalem. He had been brought up learning God’s law. He knew right from wrong. He and his friends were brought to Babylon. This enemy army came in, besieged and captured the city. They took the king and they took many of the young people, the children of the leading people in Jerusalem. They are brought back to Babylon. It’s a very intimidating situation. Now they are confronted with all these things. What are they going to do?

“But Daniel purposed in his heart.” He had to make a decision at that point in his life whether or not he was going to do what he knew was right. You know, Dad and Mom weren’t there looking now. In fact, Dad and Mom may have been dead. We are not told exactly who his parents were, other than that he would have been of the royal seed of the nobility or the princes of Judah. Very possibly they may have been dead. If they weren’t, they certainly weren’t there at the palace in Babylon to know what he was doing. Here he was, removed away from all of this and, now, he was on the spot. What was he going to do? He made up his mind that he was going to do what he knew was right. He talked with these three friends of his, and they decided that they were going to obey God.

Verse 9, we are told, “Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and good will of the chief of the eunuchs.” Obviously, Daniel had conducted himself in such a way that won the affection and respect of this man who was in charge. He had behaved himself in an

appropriate way and this person wanted to do him a favor, but he was scared. He wouldn’t mind doing him a favor, but he didn’t want to get in trouble. The king was sending in his good food; he labeled it “delicacies.” It was the richest, junkiest food of the day.

Verse 10, he said, ‘This is good stuff. You’re going to pass up all this, and when the king sees you, you’re not going to look healthy. You’re going to look weak and sickly. He’s going to find out I haven’t been giving you all this good stuff he’s sending over here, and then I’m going to get in trouble.’

Verses 11-13, then Daniel said, ‘Look, let’s make a deal. The king’s not going to call us in anytime soon. Just give us ten days. Give us fruit and vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then examine us and see who looks the healthiest.’

Well, you can guess what happened. After the siege of Jerusalem and all these things, most of them came there, and what did they start doing? They started gorging themselves on all the junk food—the refined flour and sugar—all of the rich pastries and even some of the unclean delicacies they had never been allowed to taste before. What do you think happened? Well, by the time they finished gorging themselves on that for a week and a half, they were all sick. Probably half of them had colds. You can imagine the situation.

Daniel and his friends had been on a really strict healthy diet. They had been drinking a lot of water and eating a lot of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Sure enough, when the man in charge came in to look at them, ‘Hey, how about that! You guys look healthy and you seem to feel good. These others over here are sluggish and look kind of “green around the gills.”’ So, he said he would give them permission to continue to eat this way. They took a strong stand when they were confronted with compromise. What was the result? God blessed them. You know, God takes note of our efforts. God takes note, and God appreciates our efforts and our sincerity. When we step out and try to do something because we know it’s right, God has ways of working things out.

Verse 17, “As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom [God gave them insight and perception that made them stand out above everybody else there.]; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” God took note of these young men and He blessed them.

Of course, eventually this period of time ended, and they were to be brought in and examined before the king.

Verses 18-19, “Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king.” God made them stand out above all these fellows. The king talked with them, quizzed them, asked questions, held discussions and these four clearly stood out. The king was much more impressed with them than he was with any of the others.

Verse 20, “And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them [the more he talked to them], he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.” He was impressed with these young fellows. They were perhaps 20 years of age by this time. The king thought these guys had more “on the ball.” They were ten times smarter than all these advisors he had over here. You see—God can work things out. God’s law and truth are a source of wisdom.

Daniel 2:1-2, “Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.” He called them in and he said, ‘I want you to tell me my dream and the interpretation.’

Verse 4, they said, “...Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”

You find that a lot of these kings were rather quick to “fly off the handle.”

Verse 5, ““But the king answered and said to the Chaldeans, ‘My decision is firm [KJV, “The thing is gone from me.”]: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.’” The king said, ‘The thing is gone from me. I want to know what it is. If you don’t tell me, I am going to chop you up in little pieces.’

Verse 6, ““However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.’”

Verses 7-8, they said, ‘You tell us what you dreamed and we will tell you the interpretation.’ The king was suspicious of them.

Verse 9, ““if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time [situation] has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me [declare to me] its interpretation.’” The king said, ‘If I tell you the dream, you will make up some kind of meaning for it. But if you really have insight, if you really know, if God is really revealing these things to you, then you will know what I dreamed. You tell me what I dreamed, and then tell me what it meant.’ And they said, ‘We can’t do that.’

Verse 10, “The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, ‘There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean.’”

They answered, ‘Nobody can tell you what you dreamed. If you tell us what you dreamed, we have an interpretation for you. We just have to know what you dreamed.’ Well, the king wasn’t stupid. He was in some ways, but he was able to figure out a few things. He decided that these guys could make up something. They went on back and forth and they were scared. They were really sweating, but they knew better than to make up some dream because he would know that it wasn’t the dream that he had dreamed. Then they really would be in trouble, so they kept trying to stall for time.

Verse 12, “For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.” ‘They are all a bunch of frauds. Since they are all fakes, I might as well chop off the heads of all of them.’ He was fed up with this.

Verses 13-19, “So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; he answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, ‘Why is the decree from the king so urgent?’ Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was

revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”

Daniel went back to his friends and said, ‘Let’s pray about it and God will show us.’ Daniel evidenced a tremendous amount of faith here. He was put in a situation where he was completely dependent upon God. Time and time again, what did Daniel do? He spent a lot of time in prayer.

Verses 20-21, “Daniel answered and said: ‘Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.’”

Verse 24, then he went to the captain of the king’s guard and he said not to destroy the wise men of Babylon. ‘Bring me in before the king and I will tell the king what he wants to know.’

Verses 25-28, “Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, ‘I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.’ The king answered and said to Daniel, ... ‘Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?’ Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, ‘The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, ....’”

Notice Daniel didn’t claim credit. He didn’t say, ‘Yes, king, I really am quite a bit wiser than all these other wise men, and I have insight into this.’ Daniel didn’t claim any credit.

Verse 28, continuing, he said, “...there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.” It’s concerning what will be in the latter days; Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was a dream that relates to the end time.

As we go through, we have the dream that Daniel had described to Nebuchadnezzar.

Verses 31-38, “You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was

found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ... — you are this head of gold.”

The Babylonian kingdom, symbolized by Nebuchadnezzar who was its king, was this head of gold.

Verse 39, “But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours [It won’t have quite the brilliance and luster that you have.]; .... Now, we know from history that the empire of the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.

Verse 39, continuing, “...then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.” A third kingdom would come along. The kingdom of Alexander the Great, the Greco-Macedonian Empire, conquered the Persians in 331 B.C.

Verse 40, it continues, “And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, ....” Well, the Roman Empire emerged and by 31 A.D. had swallowed up all the pieces of the old Greek Empire. The Roman Empire continued down. About 300 years later, it divided into the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire; it continued down to modern times through various revivals and resurrections.

It’s interesting to realize that at the beginning of this century, there were two titles in Europe used by European royalty that traced their origin back to Caesar. The word “Kaiser” is the German form of “Caesar.” Actually, the Latin pronunciation of “Caesar” is “Kaiser.” We use the Anglicized pronunciation, but even the Latin pronunciation would have been “Kaiser.” The Germans simply spelled it out to duplicate that pronunciation. “Kaiser” is the German form of Caesar; the Russian “Czar” or “Tsar” meant “Caesar.” The Russian Czars traced their title back through the Eastern Roman emperors. The Eastern Roman Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, continued down until the 1400s before the Turks finally conquered it. The niece of the last Eastern Roman emperor married the Grand Duke of Moskove and he took the title “Caesar” after Constantinople fell. The successors of the Eastern Roman Empire were the Greek-Slavic Orthodox realm of eastern and portions of central Europe that were the Greek-Slavic Orthodox areas. The various Orthodox

churches acknowledged the supremacy of the patriarch at Constantinople.

If you have ever seen Russian writing, you realize that the Russian alphabet is derived from Greek, as opposed to the alphabets in Western Europe, which derived from the Latin.

The successors of the eastern realm came down through the Greek-Slavic Orthodox areas of Eastern Europe and the Latin-Germanic Catholic realm in the west came down through the Holy Roman emperors. All that was centered in the west comes all the way down—and finally you have ten toes.

Verses 41-42, we are told that these ten toes represent ten kings.

Verse 44, ““And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; ...”

We trace it clearly. Daniel 2 runs from ancient Babylon all the way down to the time ahead of us when Jesus Christ is going to return and set up the Kingdom of God. These ten toes represent the final ten kings—this ten-nation union that is going to be smashed by Jesus Christ at His return.

All of the things that have been happening in Europe, these are things Mr. Herbert Armstrong was talking about 30, 40, 50 years ago and more. We have one or two here who have been associated with the work and have magazines and heard the broadcasts going way back to the time right after World War II. If you talk to anybody who has been around the Church for years, they will tell you they were not surprised at the events that happened when the Berlin Wall fell and when Germany reunited. Nobody who has been around the Church for years was surprised or shocked because we heard those things years ago. I heard Mr. Herbert Armstrong talking about it way back in the 60s, and I've read articles that he's written. I've talked to others who heard him say it in the 50s and in the 40s. The reason he said it was because he read Daniel 2 and other places that we will go through.

Verse 48, we find that the king was very impressed and put Daniel over the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3 shows the extent to which Nebuchadnezzar generally did not get the point.

Verse 1, as he got to thinking about this, he decided that he would build a big 90-foot tall image of gold, set it up in the plain of Dura and everybody would worship it. I'm sure he made the thing to look like himself. It started out with a head that looked like him and came on down.

He was going to build this thing. Daniel had told him about this dream, and he said this “image business” gave him a good idea.

Verses 3-6, he put up this image and all the leaders were gathered together. They were going to strike up the band and play, and when everybody heard the music, they were all supposed to bow down to the image. Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Anybody that doesn't want to worship my new image, we are going to throw them into a fiery furnace.’

Daniel 3:7, “...when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.”

Verse 10, ““You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image...” ‘You made a decree and said that when you strike up the band, you want everybody to fall down.’

Verse 12, ““There are certain Jews... : Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; .... They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.” They evidently decided not to go after Daniel at this point. I guess they figured that Daniel had a little too much “stroke.” They would get his friends and then go for him next—a typical political move.

Verse 13, “Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.”

Verses 14-15, he said, ‘I've heard a report that you don't serve my gods and you're not worshiping my image. I tell you what, I am going to give you another chance because I am a nice guy. I have the band right over here. I'm going to give the maestro the nod and the band is going to strike up. All you fellows have to do is fall down and worship and everybody's happy.’

Nebuchadnezzar went on and made a very foolish statement at the end of this.

Verse 15, ““...But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?””

The king said, ‘If you don't, I'm going to throw you into the fiery furnace. I don't care which God you worship; He can't get you out of that.’ That was not a smart statement.

Verse 16, ““...we have no need to answer you in this matter.”” They answered, ‘You don't need to

give us time to think this over. We want to tell you something.’

Verse 17, “...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.” They said, ‘Do you want to know which God can do this? Well, we want you to know our God can do it. He can deliver us and He’s going to deliver us out of your hands. He can deliver us from this fiery furnace.’

Verse 18, “...let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image....”

Verse 19, “Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed....” Boy, he was mad. He commanded that they heat the furnace seven times hotter. He wanted them to really crank up the heat.

Verse 20, “And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning furnace.”

Verse 21, they bound them up and threw them in.

Verses 24-26, “Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ ‘Look!’ he answered, ‘I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’ Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.’” You better believe he was really asking nicely this time. They came out.

Verse 27, “...and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.”

Verse 28, “Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, !...’”

Verse 29, “Therefore I made a decree [he liked to make decrees] that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; ....” This was Nebuchadnezzar’s famous and favorite punishment. Every time he got mad, he threatened to cut you up in little pieces—unless he threatened to throw you into the fiery furnace.

So, now, he was “gung ho.” He gave them a promotion. You find out what an emotional sort that old Nebuchadnezzar was.

Then in chapter 4 there is actually a chapter of the Bible that King Nebuchadnezzar himself wrote.

Daniel 4:1-2, it starts out, “Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth: peace be multiplied to you. I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.” Oh, so he learned a little bit. You had better believe it!

He had this dream. He tells the story, and I am going to summarize it for the sake of time.

Verses 5-14, he saw this tree in the dream; it was a great tree. All the birds and the beasts lodged in it and it grew strong. Then a holy one gave the signal from heaven to cut down the tree.

Verses 14-17, “He cried aloud and said thus: “Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches. Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of an animal, and let seven times pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.””

Verses 18-19, Daniel came in and talked to Nebuchadnezzar about it. Daniel was astonished when he heard it. It really bothered him because he had developed affection and a liking for the king.

Verses 20-22, Daniel told him that he represented the tree.

Verses 24-26, the upshot of the vision was that the king was going to lose his sanity. His kingdom would be taken from him. He would roam the fields for seven years like an animal—stark raving mad. At the end of those seven years, he would return to his kingdom.

Then he gave the king some advice.

Verse 27, “Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous [You need to repent.], and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.””

He told him, 'If you will really try to straighten out and do what you should do, maybe this won't happen anytime soon.' You better believe he walked softly for a while. It scared him to death. A day went by; a week and a month went by and nothing happened. The carnal mind begins to forget some of these things. It begins to fade; it doesn't seem very real. Sure enough, about a year later, he was strutting around up there in the palace.

Verse 30, "The king spoke, saying, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?'" 'Look at what I've done and how great I am.'

Verse 31, "While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!'"

Verses 32-33, he went absolutely insane and wound up living like an animal for seven years.

Verse 34, "And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: ...." He came back and issued this decree that was an acknowledgement of the supremacy of God.

There are prophetic implications to chapter 4. I will not go entirely into it right now. I gave a sermon on this during the Feast of Trumpets 1989. You might want to go back to that because as we are going to see when we get into the handwriting on the wall (Daniel 5), God lays out the appointed time (Daniel 8:19).

[A transcript of the 1989 Feast of Trumpets sermon, "Babylon," is included with Bible Study # 91.]

"Seven times" (vv. 16, 32) can be seven literal times. It can be seven literal years or seven prophetic times. What Nebuchadnezzar went through was typified by what happened with the fall of Babylon. These seven prophetic times translate out into 2,520 years that passed over until the final form of Babylon could once again begin to emerge. You might want to go back on some of that.

It's no accident at all that the events that happened—the communist block began unraveling with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the communist regime—all centered around the Festival period of 1989. It all centered at the beginning of the Feast of Trumpets, and you can tie in those specific events. Go back and look at the exact dates, and it was just "bang, bang, bang." We sat and

watched those things during the Feast of Tabernacles. Every night some of these things were occurring—2,520 years from the fall of Babylon. Babylon fell on the Feast of Trumpets 539 B.C. Twenty-five hundred and twenty years later brings you to the Feast of Trumpets 1982.

What occurred at that time was a reversal of policy in Germany. Overnight the coalition party that had formed an alliance with the Social Democrats announced they were pulling out of the alliance and they brought the Christian Democrats, which is the official Roman Catholic political party in Germany. Politics in Europe do not have separation of church and state. There is an official Catholic party (Christian Democrats) in most of those nations. That's why they use the term. It was formed by the bishops after World War II.

The Christian Democrat Party was brought to power as a result of the switch on the evening that began the Feast of Trumpets 1982. Two weeks later, it took power on the evening that began the Feast of Tabernacles in 1982. Exactly seven years to the day (seven literal times from that), the Berlin Wall fell and the whole situation in Eastern Europe came together.

Some of you who were at the Feast of Tabernacles in Biloxi in 1979 heard those things. Those things were gone through and laid out. We were told exactly what was going to happen; sure enough, it came out just exactly that way. I know I have preached on this at various times. It's a matter that is laid out in advance. We will get into some of that a little bit later. If I don't pick up speed, we are going to be bogging down here. Daniel 4 tells the story of the lessons that the Most High rules in the affairs of men. God sets over nations whomsoever He will (vv. 17, 32). God has a master plan; God overrides history.

Daniel 5 tells the story of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson who had not learned that lesson. Belshazzar made a great feast. They were really boozing it up in there.

Daniel 5:1, "Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand." It wasn't just a little tiny wine glass; he was really "belting" it down.

Verse 2, "...Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them." These were sacred vessels.

Verse 4, "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and

stone.” If they were toasting each one of these gods, by the time they got down to the god of stone, you can believe they were pretty well “crooked.” They started out with the gods of gold. They all had to drink to the gods of gold. Then they drank to the gods of silver. By the time they got down to the gods of stone and wood, nobody cared what they were drinking to. They were really going to it.

Verses 5-6, “In the same hour the fingers of a man’s hand appeared and wrote opposite the lamp stand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosed [KJV, “the joints of his loins were loosed.”] ....”

Now that’s an interesting expression. It means that he had a very embarrassing accident about that point. It just absolutely scared the “daylights” out of him, and, as I said, he had a very embarrassing accident about that time. “And his knees knocked against each other.” He must have been rubbing his eyes and wondering if he was having the D.T.’s [Delirium Tremens] or seeing pink elephants. What he saw was this hand that appeared out of nowhere that started writing. It just absolutely frightened him to death.

Verse 7, “The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, ‘Whosoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.’”

He was the second ruler of the kingdom. This account doesn’t mention his father Nabonidus because he was several hundred miles away with another army and didn’t figure in at this point in time. Belshazzar had been here for a couple of years as the regent in Babylon.

Verses 8-9, the king’s wise men couldn’t explain what it meant and he was greatly troubled.

Verse 10, the queen came in.

Verse 11, she said, “‘There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, ....’” He was greatly thought of and he was able to interpret many things for Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 12, “‘...let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.’”

Verses 13-15, Daniel was brought in. Belshazzar tries to “lay it on thick.”

Verse 16, “‘And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.’”

Verse 17, “‘Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, ‘Let your gifts be for yourself, ....’” He knew that his gifts were going to do him no good.

Verse 18, “‘O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor.’”

Verse 20, “‘But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed....’”

Verses 21-22, “‘Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses. But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this.’”

‘You remember this; you were a child when these events were going on. You remember this, but it hasn’t changed your conduct. You have this contemptible attitude toward the God of heaven.’

Verse 23, “‘And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house [temple] before you, ....’” They brought in the sacred vessels.

Verses 24-25, “‘Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN [KJV, “PERES”].’” In the Chaldean language, these were words that were units of measurement. The mina, the shekel and the peres were units of measurement. The problem wasn’t that they didn’t recognize the words. It’s like you had something that was suddenly written on the wall that said, ‘pounds, pounds, tons and ounces.’ What does that mean? You recognize the words, but the statement doesn’t make sense. ‘Feet, feet, inches and yards.’ I know what an inch is and I know what a foot and a yard is, but that’s nonsense. It doesn’t mean anything. It wasn’t that they didn’t know what a mina, shekel or peres was, but it didn’t mean anything. It was a meaningless expression. They knew that it had

to mean something, but they couldn't figure it out.

Verses 26-28, he said, "This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

Verses 30-31, "That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Daruis the Mede, received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old."

Babylon had been besieged by the Persians for a period of time. The Babylonians thought they were invincible; they didn't think that Babylon could be conquered. The walls of Babylon were tremendous. They were so thick that there was like a highway that ran around the top. They could literally have chariots races on it. There was no way to break through; you could batter on it for a year. They thought it was impossible. No way! They had all the food they wanted. They had water. They had an impregnable wall. There was nothing the Persians could do. They were feasting and thought they were invulnerable—they weren't!

You know what the Persians did? They dug a trench. The Euphrates River flowed right through Babylon. There was a guard that came down into the water so you couldn't come through with boats or anything like that. The Persians dug a diversionary canal away from Babylon that connected the Euphrates River with a small tributary. That night they broke the earthen dam and diverted the water of the Euphrates. Within a very short time, the water level started dropping when they broke the dam loose back several miles away. All of a sudden, the water was diverted and it began to drop. When it dropped far enough, they moved their army into the muddy river channel underneath the wall. While Babylon was boozing it up, all of a sudden, the army was on the inside rather than out, and in one night's time, Babylon fell.

People boast and they think, 'We have it made and we have security.' I tell you what, when God is ready for something to happen, it can happen so quickly that it just makes you shake your head. That is a very important lesson.

This MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN is interesting. "MENE" has to do with numbers. We are told that this is something that has to do with numbers that are weights and they are to be divided. "MENE" is derived from "mina," which is a unit of measuring weight. "TEKEL" is the alternate spelling of "shekel," another unit of

weight. "UPHARSIN" means "and peres." The "u" or the "v" in the Hebrew language is the "and." "Peres" is yet another unit of weight.

There are 50 shekels in a MENE and 25 shekels in a peres. There are 126 shekels of weight altogether counting the one shekel. When you divide them into their smallest unit of weight, which is the "gerah," you find a reference to that back in Leviticus 27.

Leviticus 27:25, "And all your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel."

There are 50 shekels in a mina and 25 shekels in a peres. If you have mina and mina, add that and you have 100 shekels. Add the one shekel, the shekel (or tekell) itself, and that's 101. Add the 25 shekels that are the peres and you come up with 126. We are told 20 gerahs to the shekel. To divide it down, take these numbers that are weights and divide them down to the smallest number. Then you multiply the 20 x 126 and you come out with 2,520.

Daniel 5:27, Babylon was weighed and found wanting. It remained in abeyance. Again, you come back to this 2,520-year period—the seven times.

MENE	=	50 shekels	=	1,000 gerahs
MENE	=	50 shekels	=	1,000 gerahs
TEKEL	=	1 shekels	=	20 gerahs
PERES	=	<u>25 shekels</u>	=	<u>500 gerahs</u>
		126 shekels		<b>2,520 gerahs</b>
		<u>x 20 gerahs</u>		
		<b>2,520 gerahs</b>		

Revelation 12:14 defines times, time and half a time (three and one-half years). Revelation 11:2-3 defines that as 42 months (three and one-half years) or 1,260 days (three and one-half years). Seven times is twice three and one-half years. Twice 1,260 is 2,520. So, seven times comes out to 2,520 prophetic days (or years—Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6, a day for a year). Mene, mene, shekel and peres—if you take those numbers that are weights and divide them down to the smallest denominator, they add up to a total of 2,520. Again, you have this interesting number that comes out. Babylon was weighed, found wanting and remained in abeyance for this period after it fell to the Medes and the Persians on this evening in 539 B.C.

Cyrus was the king over the entire Medo-Persian Empire. Darius the Mede was the number-two man that was set as king of Babylon. Cyrus did not enter Babylon, but he masterminded the siege. Once he saw what was occurring, he took

a large part of the army and went elsewhere. This was the fall of the capital, but all the battles weren't over. The battle with Nabonidus, who was the king of the Babylonian Empire, took place a little later. Cyrus took his army to go after Nabonidus and allowed Darius the Mede to come in as the king or regent in Babylon.

Daniel 6:1-2, "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one [KJV, "of whom Daniel was first"], ...."

Word must have gotten out very quickly about what Daniel had done. He was very impressed and set Daniel in positions of power.

Verses 4-5, people were jealous of him. They figured they couldn't find anything to accuse Daniel of except in areas pertaining to his worship of God.

Verses 7-9, they talked Darius into making this crazy decree that nobody could pray to anybody except him for a month. They made the decree.

Sure enough, they found Daniel kept doing what he was always doing.

Verse 10, "...And in the upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days." He didn't make a big public show about it, but he went to his house and knelt down and prayed. So, sure, they were spying on him. They went and told the king he violated the decree.

King Darius had a little more humility than Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 14, "And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself [It just really upset him that he could have been so stupid as to do something like that.], and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him."

But remember the law of the Medes and Persians? Once a decree had been issued, it couldn't be reversed. The king kept trying to figure a way to get Daniel out of this and he couldn't.

Verse 16, so Darius told him, "...Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." So, even Darius evidenced some faith.

He was ashamed of himself for having done something like this. He had allowed himself to be flattered and his ego "button" pushed to where he did something like this. He told Daniel he believed that the God that he served would deliver him. He knew how diligent he was and believed God would deliver him.

Verse 18, in fact, the king passed the night fasting. He wasn't able to sleep. He just worried and was just sick all night about what he had done. He certainly showed a little more humble attitude than many of the kings we have run into.

Verses 19-20, "Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?'" And Daniel said, 'Yes!'

Verses 22-23, "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; .... Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, ...."

Verse 24, "And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions— ...."

We find that by this time, the lions had worked up a good appetite. The angel had shut their mouth. These old lions—can you imagine? Here are these lions. They had dinner right in front of them and their stomachs were growling and churning away, but they couldn't get their mouths open. They must have been pretty frustrated by the time those other guys were thrown down in there. The angel left and then the lions helped themselves.

Verses 25-27, Darius wrote a decree.

He was impressed.

Verse 28, "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." Daniel was given great favor.

We go through in sort of the story flow of the book.

Now, as we come to Daniel 7, we have a vision that Daniel had in the first year of Belshazzar.

Verses 1-7, he saw four great creatures: a lion, a bear, a leopard that had four heads and a fourth great dreadful beast.

Daniel 7:17-18, "Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." We have this sequence.

Remember, you had the gold, silver, brass and the iron. Here, you have the lion, the bear, the leopard and this terrible creature with iron teeth. It ends up with God taking the kingdom. Again, we have this same sequence. We will go more into that in the book of Revelation.

Verses 19-20, “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and about the ten horns that were on its head, and about the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.”

Verse 25, we are told, ““He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”” You will find this reference to either seven times or to half that duration that figures very prominently prophetically.

Just to call your attention to something, go back to Revelation 11.

Revelation 11:2, “...And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.” Now, how long is 42 months? Thirty-six months is three years; six more makes 42—that’s three and one-half years.

Verse 3, then notice, “And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

In verse 2, we find 42 months and in verse 3, it talks about 1,260 days. Now, if you take a 30-day month and multiply 30 x 42, that’s 1,260. Forty-two 30-day months is 1,260 days.

Revelation 12:6, continue down, “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”

Verse 14, continue down, “But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, ...” One thousand two hundred sixty days, 42 months or time, times and a half a time—these are equated right here in Revelation 11 and 12. It’s not just me reaching up in the air and pulling out some numbers. The Bible uses those numbers and clearly defines 1,260 days, 42 months, time, times and a half a time, and three and one-half years. You double it and you have seven years. When you double 1,260 days, you have 2,520 days. So, certain of these numbers have significance.

I can see one number that has significance is the *time*. There’s no way I can do justice to the rest

of the book of Daniel if we quit by 8:30. I tell you what we’ll do. We are going to finish up the book of Daniel next time. I’ll make a two-part lesson out of Daniel.

Let me go on a little further here in Chapter 7. There’s still a lot of material here.

In Daniel 7:3-5, Daniel sees these four creatures coming up out of the sea. He sees one like a lion; he sees one like a bear. This bear has three ribs in its mouth.

Daniel 7:6, “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.”

Verses 7-9, “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; ...”

He talks about the Kingdom of God being established.

Verses 12-13, “As for the rest of the beasts [referring to the ten kings], they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!”

Daniel uses the term “One like the Son of Man” or “One like the Son of God” several times. Do you know why he uses that term? Though Jesus Christ eternally co-existed with the Father, until He became flesh and was born of the virgin, Mary, He was not the Son of God. He became the Son of God. He was God—the Logos or the Word. There was a relationship between the Ones that we know as the Father and the Son, but they did not have a Father-Son relationship until the One that we know as Jesus Christ—the Word—became flesh. This is prior to Christ’s incarnation as a human being. Daniel can only describe Him as “One like the Son of Man” or “Son of God.” That was what He was going to be, and that is the appropriate term that we use, but that exact relationship had not yet been defined because this was several hundred years prior to that event in history.

Verse 13, continuing, "...One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him."

Verse 14, "Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

Verse 15, Daniel didn't understand what this meant.

Verse 17, he was told that these four great beasts are kings or kingdoms that will arise.

Verse 18, "But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."

Verses 19-20, he was really curious about this fourth beast and about the ten horns.

Verses 21-22, "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom."

Verse 23-24, "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth [If you remember the image, this would be the legs of iron; this is the Roman Empire.], which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them [Or, 'in the same way.' Not 'after them' chronologically but 'in like manner as they arise' coming up out of this empire. There will be these successor states to the Roman Empire and this little one pops up—it is, in some ways, a successor and in other ways, it is not.]; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.'"

Verse 25, "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law [Here we have what, in reality, is a religious authority trying to change the law of God, trying to change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, trying to change the Holy Days to pagan holidays.]. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."

Verses 26-27, "But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given

to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

The Roman Empire fell. After it collapsed in 476 A.D., there were three quick successor kingdoms that established themselves there in Italy and in portions of the Empire: the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths. We will go into a little bit more about them next time.

The little horn (vv. 8, 24-25) is a reference to the papacy. The bishop of Rome was responsible for soliciting Justinian, the emperor of the east, to come in and to overthrow the Vandals, Heruli, and the Ostrogoths. Justinian came in to conquer those kingdoms and to establish what is called in history, "The Imperial Restoration," which was established in 554 A.D.

When Rome collapsed in 476 A.D., the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths successfully came in and took over. Justinian was solicited out of the east several decades later. Finally, in 554 A.D., he came in and overthrew them. We will pick up the story there next time.

You have the handout material on Daniel. We will come back and pick it up and go through more details on Daniel 11.

There is an awful lot of material packed into the book of Daniel. There are, certainly, principles relating to Christian living and to handling ourselves in various circumstances. There is the history of the people of God during this period after the exile. There is also the background of a tremendous amount of prophecy that sets the tone for what's happening in the world today. Why do we see what's happening on the world scene? What we see are events of tremendous significance. There are events going on right now in Central Europe, down in the Balkans. There are a lot of things that tie in and are setting the stage for the final emergence of a great power in Europe.

In Daniel 2:33, 41, the final ten kings are composed partly of iron and partly of miry clay (KJV) or potter's clay. This term "miry clay" could also be rendered "ceramic." If you take something that is composed of iron and miry clay, it doesn't stick together well. You can take something of iron and ceramic and depending on how you paint it, and it can look all the same. But you know what? If you smote it with something hard, you know what would happen? —All the ceramic would shatter.

What you have in Europe right now, on the one hand, is the Germanic realm. Of course, Germany is the successor of the Iron Kingdom. Remember what the highest decoration that the

Germans gave? –The Iron Cross! Everybody else gave gold medals. The Germans had the Iron Cross. On the one hand, you have hardness and regimentation. But what do you have in the Central European areas? What do you have in the Balkans? What do you have in the old communist regime, the old successor states of the Eastern Empire? You have something that can fracture a thousand different ways. That's what it is doing right now. Eventually, it's going to be put together, but it has that potential to fracture. There's always been that fractious tendency in the eastern realm. You can go back and look at ancient Greece. Greece was never a nation. It was composed of about 50 different city-states that were always squabbling among one another. There was always that fractious tendency.

If you look at the Orthodox realm as opposed to the Catholic realm, the Orthodox realm is split. You have Serbian-Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox and all these various Orthodox groups that are technically in communion with one another, but they fracture and sub-divide. They have always had the fractious tendency in the Greek realm. The Balkans keep dividing down. They keep dividing some of these countries down and down and down.

The word "Balkans" comes from a word that means "mountain." It is a very mountainous, rugged area. You had all these little isolated groups, and everybody spoke a little bit different dialects. Until modern times, it was hard to get over the mountains. Every little group sort of thought they were similar, but there were differences. It was difficult to even rule because it was such a rugged area.

There's always been that fractious tendency that they've had. That's why, when it's likened to a mixture of iron and miry clay, it's likened to something that won't stick together. When you smite it, the iron reverberates and the ceramic shatters. Now, when God smites it, the whole thing is going to shatter. Eventually, it's going to shatter internally. It won't last very long. We will go into that when we get to Revelation. We see the stage being set. You see these fractures that are spreading through Eastern Europe and all these nations are sub-dividing. Yugoslavia has already fallen apart. Czechoslovakia is about to fall apart right now between the Czechs and the Slovaks. They are going to divide it up. It keeps dividing and subdividing in those areas.

We will stop there and pick it up next time.